

, \AUTO\MADNESS.NUC
Thursday, June 21? 1995

Dream:

Israeli guard at entrance, suspects me, questions me. Blows a gas at my forehead, shines a light at it, asks: You've had this done before. (not)

I had been thinking at that moment (I tell him later): Israel is the main target for a (smuggled, or short-range) nuclear weapon. Can they really guard their borders well enough?

...I am to see McGovern at an event. I am reminded of when I first knew of McGovern (not correct, as I realize later in dream): during election of 1972. (At first, I can't remember date: 1980?) when SU was nuc-armed only to extent...?

...Two visions of future: 1) a world of minimum deterrence, moving to NFWF, delegitimation of nuclear weapons (and energy, as Chris Wing implied by her question) (to stop proliferation, not just to avoid accidents and to stop adding to nuclear waste problem and to save resources, the reasons anti-nuclear activists emphasized in 70s. Did Barry Commoner, UCS (?) emphasize proliferation, terrorism/theft?)

2) A world (I see a globe) armed to teeth with nucs, counterforce, first-strike threats, alert, ABM (to which Repubs are returning), with wars occurring, threats, ready to blow at any moment...

I think: it is the second from which we have been delivered, temporarily (at least), but to which we are returning. (It is the recent history of this which is the main warning to the future of what is possible, the main confirmation of the principle, This is not a species to be trusted with nuclear weapons, this is what can happen (because, indeed, it did: what has happened was/is possible, really possible, must be taken into account, considered, to some degree prepared for/against. Like Hiroshima, as I was telling Michael last night. On the one hand, people in America believe that nuclear threats "really" can be justified, probably are justified (Presidential, American, threats get very strong benefit of the doubt; you can trust the President's judgment) because in an actual, recent, major historical instance of nuclear use--in fact, the only case, there is no counter-example--the US nuclear attack actually was unquestionably justified, even though the decision was subject to no democratic checks or debate.

On the other hand, the actual reality was the opposite; there was no justification that would convince anyone other than, perhaps, Byrnes and Truman (a pair making the decision by themselves in the manner of Nixon and Kissinger, without confiding reasons--for rejecting advice to clarify surrender terms earlier, or to wait for SU entry--to anyone else). What the public

it was possible — US/public: for a nuc attack to be justified + beneficial.
(maybe) — for US officials to attack although... to believe it was justified...

believes--on the basis of what they knew at the time, and then what they were told authoritatively--are simple, independent facts, unequivocal, are really the elements of a necessity defense, coherently manufactured and lied about as a defense lawyer's brief against a war crimes indictment. Each one is false. The reality is that this was not an instance of a justified slaughter of 100,000, 200,000, 300,000 people.

Has there ever been such an instance? (Where the massacre of people on the scale we routinely threaten with nuclear weapons has been justified? Let alone: where the decision could safely be left to the judgment of a single human?)

Not the slaughter of Germans in WWII from the air. Not Dresden, or Hamburg, or Berlin, or Darmstadt; or any of the perhaps 500,000 civilians killed. (In contrast to the strictly military casualties on both sides. But what if invasion of Germany had promised to cost 1M US casualties, or dead, or half a million, or a quarter million? How many were lost?)

How about the Japanese civilians slaughtered before the A-bomb? This one is much harder: the necessity defense is not as hollow as the actual case for the atom-bombs (after, and in addition to, the bombing that started in March). The Japanese then were not as close to surrender, on comparable terms, if any, as they were after Okinawa and the bombing. But what of: continued strategic bombing of military (and industry): Hansell. Blockade, above all. (Despite Hoover's reservations). Warning of Soviet entry, after Yalta agreement; or, as soon as blockade of Japan would prevent movement of Japanese troops from China back to the homeland (with threat of invasion). "Feint" of invasion preparations. And finally: surrender terms.

[Friday: I told MHH yesterday at lunch about my dream, and raised question of bombing Japanese. He said, at end of conversation, that no massacre had ever been justified, right to do, whether or not it appeared "necessary," and this included the Japanese firebombing. It should simply have been ruled out, rejected, not considered. Then, as alternative to costly invasion, surrender terms should have been considered. E.g., Japanese could have been told that for a limited period--an ultimatum--we would promise not to indict the Emperor (or, I added, perhaps even accepting the Army's desire: not to try them in an international court; perhaps let them disarm themselves? Even, no occupation? Only a more limited occupation? (After all, we didn't carry the de-fascistisation so far, not to the economy). Then, if they didn't comply, the final result would be we would hang the Emperor. (But wouldn't that require an invasion?)

How daunting was the prospect of 12,000, 25,000, 45,000 dead at that point? It would have been only 10% of our total KIA in war. Whereas post-estimates of 250,000--1 Million dead would imply that we would double, or quadruple, our KIA in this operation! (What were casualties in first weeks of Normandy; and for invasion of

Germany itself?) Would we have used A-bomb to avoid invasion? Was there any discussion at the time of casualties in Japan being greater than in Germany?! as the post-estimates would imply.]

I conclude: Bombing of civilians was not necessary or justified, even in this case. It was not "necessary" to imitate the Japanese or Nazis, or Tamerlane, or Genghis Khan (or the Old Testament Jews); hence it was not justified. It was not necessary, or prudent, to jettison the absolute prohibition against the deliberate killing of noncombatants, in this case. Or in any actual historical case. (I say this subject to refutation by some historical instance I have not thought of. Check with Markusen!)

As I said to Michael last night: The Chechens use of terrorism against 2000 hostages in Budynnovsk may prove (if it doesn't lead to huge retaliation, and still more if it leads to a resolution of the conflict) to be an instance where threats against as many as 2000 (and killing of many) looks justified, perhaps even "necessary" (though not obligatory). It seems to have appeared so even to some of the hostages themselves, and to many Russians, and to the G7 despite Yeltsin's denunciation of terrorism.

Likewise the same week (!) Karadzic's (the war criminal! which raises the dilemma of negotiating with him!) seizure of hundreds of peacekeeper hostages, to get bombing of Bosnian serbs stopped (and to allow them to threaten Sarajevo!) seems to have been very successful: when perhaps nothing else would have worked. (Certainly, so quickly). A great week for terrorism!

Still, neither of these involved potential victims on the scale of a fire-bombing or nuclear weapon: a whole city. What if either of these threatened use of a nuclear weapon against a city (which could easily happen, any time now)? I would not regard this as justified, even if potentially or actually successful. (But these particular terrorists could hardly be charged with creating the effective precedent "legitimising" or suggesting the possibility of that. Nor are the heads of any nuclear weapon states, or their publics, in a position to criticise or indict that).

As Chernomyrdin has shown--tentatively, till we see later consequences--even breaking such a rule as "never bargain with a terrorist" can plausibly (at least, in the short run) appear justified. Anything, hypothetically, can be justified. But the question is important: Has it really happened, in "recent times," and if this is allegedly so, was the justification valid, realistic, do its premises stand up to "objective" evaluation? (How about the slaughter at God's command in the Old Testament? Just this month, various commentators--independently?!--are using these alleged examples to question God's judgement, authority, values! (The Holocaust, Hiroshima, evil. Last week, conference...))

MM ...It's all coming back. (Dream) Selective realism: Repubs vs. Seawolf (Chafee votes for Seawolf, to get support on breeder!), with Dems for; Repubs for ABM, again, Dems against (how does this come about?). Congress (party?) for B-2s, vs. Administration. Each party is realistic about the lack of need for the particular weapons that the other party is for; each "crazy" about the need for certain weapons that are manufactured in "their" districts: like Seawolf vs. B2.

pOSSIBLE replay of arms race--or at least, rejection of arms control, let alone of further disarmament--

Continued doomsday machine in Russia, according to Blair. (Whole issue of Decapitation, as prime example of Hinckley lobic, of "mining Haiphong" military logic. It might work; nothing else will;; you can't prove it won't; willingness to gamble. The only "win" strategy... (What else will get Jody Foster's appreciation; McNamara on bombing: "What's your alternative?" Proactive, not reactive, defensive...)

Something about nuclears--is it their secrecy? small group of decision-makers? Tunnel vision? Desperate threat; Godlike destructiveness--that inspires looniness, wacko thinking, lunacy. Russian roulette. Threats of vast destruction, irreversible, to avert much more limited reverses, avenge personal humiliations. Infantile destructive thinking.

Need to wake up. Grow up. (Is that a fantasy, of the young?) Mature, as the psychohistorians fantasize.

This was the answer to the question I was asking myself and MBG the day before the taping: What is this about? What is the story? What am I trying to say?

Not just: This is my life, a memoir, this is what happened to me. Not, this is what all I learned. Nor: nuc threats are terrorism, Presidents are terrorists, capable of making and carrying out such threats (that is more what I did tell, accusingly, to Penn). (C.P. Snow's point: Were we wolves?)

A Chronicle of Madness. (Snow's point about technologists and decisions in secret by small groups: of men! In my dream, I advise Pat: scream it out, in conference: It's not humans, it's men...who do these things! That may not be the answer, but that's where to start! That is not to be denied, obscured.)

See \auto\nuc, June 14. I understood this point on June 14. But I forgot it, in the days leading up to the Penn taping; didn't remember it even yesterday, the day after. It's very tempting to tell MBG, though super-frustrating to relate this after wasting the Penn filming. But I broke up with her yesterday (for a year"). (Is that related to my breakthrough this morning? Or was it the conversation with MGE last night? It was that that led me to write this this morning).